

Lack of Genuine Church Prophets Birthed Trump Phenomenon

Innumerable it seems are the issues facing the nation. Abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, self defense and ownership of guns, marriage, parental rights, pornography, gambling, alcohol use and abuse, drugs, the environment, crime, corruption in government, government assistance, national defense, foreign policy, freedom of speech, religious liberty, etc., etc., etc.

What seems glaringly scarce are genuine prophets. The prophets of old were God's spokesman for their day. They interpreted the times according to the revelation of God.

There is a sense in which every pastor must play the role of the prophet. Yet today such preaching would be enough to put goose bumps on the back of the pews of most churches.

W. Phillip Keller has eloquently written:

"In so many places the pastors and teachers are well-nigh silent about social ills. They make no strong stand against those elements that are destroying their people. They carry no deep conviction about the corruption all about them. They will not risk a confrontation with the forces of evil. Their silence gives tacit approval to the wrong influences and human philosophies which are tearing us to pieces.

"The leaders are fearful lest they be blamed eccentrics, puritans, or prophets of doom. They much prefer to be popular."

Some evangelical leaders seem mystified by presidential candidate Donald Trump, and his lead in the polls among

evangelical voters. Bryan Fischer of the American Family Association has accurately stated that there is really “little to be liked in the Donald’s worldview and personal history.”

I would agree, but perhaps it’s that a vast host of evangelicals are drawn to something Trump does that they rarely hear in the pulpits of their own churches. He speaks with passion, boldness, and authority. Americans, including evangelical Christians, are tired of leaders who have little or no moxie.

I suggest the nation has been deprived of prophets – prophets like those described in the Scriptures – men who had great capacity for emotion – men who were capable of deep feelings. Men who had fire in their bellies and their words could breathe fire in righteous indignation. At other times their utterances would be mingled with tears.

The late G. Earl Guinn, who was once the Chairman of the Department of Preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, put it this way: “The true man of God can weep at suffering, he can get downright mad at sin, and he can rejoice at moral progress.”

Richard Baxter wrote: “I preach as though I were never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men.”

Too much preaching today fails to be based solidly in the moral authority of God’s Word and delivered out of deep conviction. Instead, it is made up of nice little warm fuzzy remarks sprinkled with a few anecdotes meant to make us feel good about ourselves, when the very wrath of God abides on us. The results of such preaching are devastating on more levels than we can know.

It is not hyperbole to say that our culture is quickly headed for destruction. The hope for our restoration lies in remedies of the heart, where our problems really exist. The sickness killing us is our willful rejection of God and his order.

But to quote again from G. Earl Guinn: "Apparently instead of hearing prophets of God sounding a trumpet call to obedience and faith, they have heard inoffensive little men tooting piccolos and then running to the door [of the church] to grin like Cheshire cats at those whose compliments are demanded by their itching ears."

Indeed. Where are the prophets?

Jesus was the ultimate prophet. He wasn't concerned about being palatable or appealing. His message was distinct and divergent from a corrupt society. His zeal for the Father's way so consumed Him that at times it must have seemed as though He was trying to prevent the possibility of followers.

He made tall demands, calling for hardship and cross-bearing. He warned that anyone who would be His disciple would experience alienation from friends and even family members.

He spoke against entrenched evil and misguided powers; powers that precipitated injustice, powers that, humanly speaking, He could only offend to his own disadvantage and never possibly overcome.

He demonstrated by both His life and words that the Creator God is Holy and demands the same of those made in His image. Moreover, in the end, He was willing to lay down everything to redeem the ones who failed to understand Him and were hostile to His ministry.

Where are the prophets like Jesus?

During the War of 1812, the fate of our nation depended on Andrew Jackson's trusted messenger, Holdfast Gaines, an Indian scout.

Gaines was encamped with the American army on Mobile Bay when word came to Jackson that a large British force had set sail for New Orleans. The one chance was for the General to swiftly

get word to General “Dandy” Carroll in Nashville, so he could rally the long rifle frontiersman of Tennessee and Kentucky to rendezvous with him in New Orleans.

But how was this to be done with 600 miles of wilderness between them?

General Jackson’s prospects of stopping the British lie with one man – Gaines. So he gave his trusted messenger the assignment and said, “I’ll give you ten days to get there! May the Lord of hosts bless your legs!”

At sunset, as General Carroll sat dining, Holdfast Gaines stumbled through the doorway, making the 600 mile trek in six days and five nights!

General Carroll rallied the long riflemen and met up with General Jackson in New Orleans. The British were defeated. New Orleans was saved because the messenger laid everything on the line to deliver his message.

The fate of our nation hangs in the balance again. It’s not an enemy from without that threatens this time, but the enemy from within our sinful souls. Our hope, in large degree, is dependent on whether we have prophets of God willing to pay any price to deliver his message.

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